

## Neurotrauma Supports

### Tips to Accessing Key Services

- Be specific. Know exactly what you want before you call a particular agency. Talk to a care-receiver, doctor, clergy, social worker, etc., and get a clear idea of the type of service you want. If you are unsure of the exact type of agency you need, contact our Neurotrauma Helpline (808 453-6151). Our office will try to provide you with a direct reference or an idea of the type of office, agency or organization, to call.
- Be polite but firm. Do not lose your temper and hang up. Explain your problem as clearly and as often as necessary.
- Try to call in the morning or right after lunch. These are probably the best times to reach case-workers for most agencies.
- Don't apologize when asking for help. If your relative, friend or you cannot afford even a minimal fee, say so! Human service agencies can receive money through taxes, contributions, and other sources which may pay charges for the services. Also, some agencies have free volunteer services.
- Get the name of everyone you talk to. If someone is rude, refuses to help or is impolite, don't lose your temper. Remain calm but demand to talk to the person's supervisor.
- If the agency requires an intake interview, be prepared. Ask what you should bring with you for the intake interview. Take all relevant legal, medical and financial papers with you. If you feel stressed, take someone along with you. If necessary, take notes during the interview and be sure that you are clear as to what is going to happen and what responsibilities you have, including legal and financial.
- Filling in forms. Rather than visiting the local office to pick up a form or application, ask if it can be mailed to you or ask if it is on the agency's website and can be downloaded.
- In summary, be assertive and you'll end up with what you want or at least be on the right track.